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FBI Preparing for Defectors, Spies As Well as Terrorists at Olympics

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FBI Director William H. Webster said yesterday that he has been working for nearly five years to plan security for this year's Olympic Games in Los Angeles and that the FBI is preparing for defectors and spies, as well as terrorists.

"It won't be just terrorism," Webster said. "There'll be a lot of people we're interested in from an intelligence point of view . . . I think we'll have some defections too. We'll have to deal with that."

Webster said the FBI will be on the alert for foreign spies who show any special interest in the high-tech Silicon Valley. He added that the Olympics will present a "marvelous opportunity" for foreign agents to come into the country "to meet some of the illegals that are planted over here who have no direct contact with their managers."

"We're looking at it as an opportunity [for the FBI] as well as a defensive move," he said.

At a lunch with reporters and editors of The Washington Post, Webster said security has been especially complex because the Olympic events will be stretched over 135 miles from San Diego to Santa Barbara and will involve 15,000 athletes and managers in addition to the huge numbers of visitors.

He said security will involve hundreds of FBI agents along with the Los Angeles Police Department and Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies.

Webster said he expects to get help from the CIA on intelligence relating to any terrorist or espionage activity at the Olympics.

On the general subject of terrorism, Webster said the figures show that terrorist incidents have decreased from 52 in 1982 to 31 last year, but he added that the figures would be meaningless if there were a major terrorist incident in this country.

He said he is particularly concerned that "what happens in the Middle East might influence what happens here . . . the levels of tension . . . Things could be triggered by incidents that have not happened yet."

There is also some concern, he said, about the number of Iranians in this country. A radical Iranian Shiite Moslem group has claimed blame for the bombing of the Marine headquarters in Beirut last October.

"There was an assumption that when we had the hostage situation, we stopped doing business with Iran . . . I've heard we did more business with Iran last year than we did before the hostages were taken. I do know that in the two weeks after Thanksgiving there were over 1,000 visa applications from Iran," he said. But he added that it would be unfair to look upon all Iranians as potential terrorists.

Webster said, "I think we've been doing what we should be doing [to prevent terrorism] . . . We've got a much larger analytical team on board . . . We've been steadily increasing our capacity to understand the workings of these organizations and improving our overall intelligence base."

"Where I'm uneasy is in the Middle East pattern, which is a relatively recent phenomenon for this country. All the intelligence we get, sometimes reliable, sometimes not, depends a lot on overseas intelligence which is furnished to us by other agencies and which sometimes turns out to be erratic . . .," he said.

Meanwhile, Webster indicated that there is some chance that he would leave the FBI without finishing out the final four years of his 10-year term as director.

"I can't ignore the fact that I'm [about] to turn 60 . . . You wonder how much longer you should stay . . . I don't have any plans. I'm not dropping hints . . . [But] I feel young and I think I have some more to contribute . . . You reach a certain age, and you have to force yourself to think about [that]," he said.